

**GOVERNOR'S STATEMENT UPON SIGNING
SENATE BILL NO. 1266
(Second Reprint)**

Senate Bill No. 1266 (Second Reprint), which I have signed today, expands the sterile syringe-exchange demonstration program set forth in the Bloodborne Disease Harm Reduction Act, P.L.2006, c.99 ("Act"), to allow any municipality to operate a sterile syringe-exchange program.

In January 2012, I signed P.L.2011, c.183, which allows individuals to purchase sterile syringes without a prescription. Later that year, the Commissioner of Health recommended extending the syringe-exchange demonstration program under the Act. Currently, there are five existing syringe-exchange programs operating in Atlantic City, Camden, Jersey City, Newark, and Paterson. These programs not only distribute clean syringes to intravenous drug users, but also deliver lifesaving education, treatment, and testing to their participants. Moreover, the use of Naloxone (commonly known as "Narcan") in these facilities has saved over 40 lives. This bill is another step in my Administration's continued efforts to prevent the transmission of blood borne diseases, such as HIV and Hepatitis C, through intravenous drug use and to encourage treatment for those suffering from substance abuse.

I commend the bill's sponsors for seeking to expand these worthwhile syringe-exchange programs throughout the State. However, this bill could be a hollow victory if the five existing syringe-exchange programs cannot keep their doors open. Currently, the existing programs are in need of sterile syringes and related supplies to continue their mission. The Legislature's proposed FY 2017 budget appropriated only \$95,000 for these programs, which would not have provided sufficient resources for the year. It is for this reason that I line item vetoed the appropriation and instead, I am directing the Commissioner of Health to invest \$200,000 in the existing syringe-exchange programs for necessary syringes and related supplies. This will provide well over a year's worth of much-needed syringes and supplies, while also providing sufficient time for current and future syringe-exchange programs to seek additional funding for resources and supplies.

Date: August 31, 2016

Respectfully,

/s/ Chris Christie

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Thomas P. Scrivo

Chief Counsel to the Governor